

Vision Screening

CHILD AND TEEN CHECKUPS (C&TC) FACT SHEET FOR PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS

Vision risk assessment or screening is required at all C&TC visits. Early identification in young children can help prevent amblyopia and other vision problems.

C&TC standards

General

Vision **risk assessment** is required at all C&TC visits up to 3 years or until vision screening can be performed. Vision **screening** is required starting at 3 years and at ages as indicated on the [C&TC Schedule of Age-Related Screening Standards](#).

Personnel

Trained clinic personnel, such as nurses and medical assistants, can perform vision screening. A licensed health care provider must interpret the results, perform a physical exam, and ensure appropriate follow-up: physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or registered or public health nurse (RN, PHN) who has completed the C&TC Comprehensive Screening training through the Minnesota Department of Health.

Documentation

Document exam findings and screening results. If screening is not completed, state the reason.

Refer to the [C&TC Provider Documentation Forms](#) for documentation examples or to use as a template with your electronic medical record.

Procedure

Physical exam

Observe external eye, alignment, and presence of nystagmus. Note extraocular movements, red reflex, pupillary light reflex, and corneal light reflex.

Risk assessment

Refer to [Child and Family Vision History and Risk Assessment Questionnaire](#).

Visual acuity screening

Refer to [Vision Screening Procedures](#).

Distance visual acuity recommendations

- Use HOTV or LEA SYMBOLS® wall or flip charts at 10 feet to perform distance visual acuity screening for ages 3-5.
- Use instrument-based vision screening for children 3-5 years who can't perform visual acuity screening with wall charts.
- Use a Sloan wall chart at 10 feet for screening ages 6 and older.
- Ensure children and youth wear their corrective lenses for the screening.
- Wall charts are the gold standard for distance visual acuity screening.

Near visual acuity (plus lens)

Perform near visual acuity screening at 10 feet using 2.50 plus lens for children 5 years and older who pass distance visual acuity screening and do not use corrective lenses.

Importance of anticipatory guidance

Identifying vision abnormalities early can prevent amblyopia, a potentially lifelong, permanent vision problem (United States Preventive Services Task Force, 2017).

Professional recommendations

American Academy of Pediatrics

Vision risk assessment begins at birth and continues throughout childhood. Begin visual acuity screening at 3 years (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2025).

United States Preventive Services Task Force

Vision screening is recommended at least once for all children between 3-5 years (United States Preventive Services Task Force, 2017).

Vision screening mandate

[Minnesota Statute § 121A.17](#) requires children ages 3-5 to receive vision screening before public school kindergarten entry.

Resources

Minnesota Department of Human Services

- [C&TC Schedule of Age-Related Screening Standards](#)
- [Minnesota Health Care Programs \(MHCP\) Provider Manual - C&TC Section](#)

Minnesota Department of Health

- [Child and Teen Checkups \(C&TC\)](#)

Other resources

- [American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus](#)
- [National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health](#)
- [National Eye Institute](#)

For more information

The Child and Teen Checkups (C&TC) program is administered through a partnership between the Minnesota Department of Human Services and the Minnesota Department of Health.

For questions about this fact sheet or to obtain this information in a different format, call 651-201-3650 or email health.childteencheckups@state.mn.us.

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Resource links

- [C&TC Schedule of Age-Related Screening Standards](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-3379-ENG)
(<https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-3379-ENG>)
- [C&TC Provider Documentation Forms](https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/policies-procedures/minnesota-health-care-programs/provider/types/ctc-resources)
(<https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/policies-procedures/minnesota-health-care-programs/provider/types/ctc-resources>)
- [Child and Family Vision History and Risk Assessment Questionnaire](http://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/childreneyouth/ctc/visionscreen/childvisnquestre.pdf)
(www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/childreneyouth/ctc/visionscreen/childvisnquestre.pdf)
- [Vision Screening Procedures](http://www.health.state.mn.us/people/childreneyouth/ctc/visionscreen/procedures.html)
(www.health.state.mn.us/people/childreneyouth/ctc/visionscreen/procedures.html)
- [Minnesota Statute § 121A.17](http://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/121A.17)
(www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/121A.17)
- [C&TC Schedule of Age-Related Screening Standards](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-3379-ENG)
(<https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-3379-ENG>)
- [Minnesota Health Care Programs \(MHCP\) Provider Manual - C&TC Section](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=dhs16_150092)
(www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=dhs16_150092)
- [Child and Teen Checkups \(C&TC\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/cfh/program/ctc/index.cfm)
(www.health.state.mn.us/divs/cfh/program/ctc/index.cfm)
- [American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus](http://www.aapos.org/home)
(www.aapos.org/home)
- [National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health](https://nationalcenter.preventblindness.org/)
(<https://nationalcenter.preventblindness.org/>)
- [National Eye Institute](http://www.nei.nih.gov) (www.nei.nih.gov)

References

- American Academy of Pediatrics. (2025, February). *Recommendations for Preventive Pediatric Health Care*. Retrieved from https://downloads.aap.org/AAP/PDF/periodicity_schedule.pdf
- United States Preventive Services Task Force. (2017, September 5). *Vision in Children Ages 6 Months to 5 Years: Screening*. Retrieved from www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/recommendation/vision-in-children-ages-6-months-to-5-years-screening